

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 1998 biennial report to the Legislature provides a summary of the state of local corrections in California, including critical challenges facing county jails and juvenile detention facilities, and a review of the various programs administered by the state Board of Corrections (BOC).

Despite successful capacity-building efforts that have more than doubled jail space in the past 18 years, California's jail system is facing an immediate and severe capacity crisis. In 1997 alone, county jails had to release nearly 275,000 inmates early due to court-ordered population caps and the lack of bed space. Many county juvenile halls and camps also operate under population caps, and the vast majority of these facilities are ill-equipped to confine today's increasingly serious young offenders. In addition to providing details about these capacity issues, Chapter 1 of this report outlines the fiscal constraints and health issues confronting local detention facilities.

Following an overview of the BOC's roles and responsibilities (Chapter 2) is a description of the jail and juvenile facility inspection process. Chapter 3 also includes results of the latest biennial inspection cycle (1996/97), which found that the vast majority of California's 456 jails are in general compliance with minimum construction and programmatic standards. Although there were numerous non-compliance issues for county juvenile halls and camps, the BOC anticipates a much higher rate of compliance for these facilities during the next inspection cycle.

Chapter 4 provides information on local jail and juvenile facility construction projects funded by state bonds and federal grants. The Jail Construction Fund, which helps finance jail projects via five voter-approved bond acts, has provided over \$1.5 billion to 56 of California's 58 counties since 1980. This fund is primarily responsible for increasing California's jail capacity from 31,824 beds in 1980 to 70,963 beds at the end of 1997. Although federally funded construction projects will further increase the capacity of local detention facilities, both the demand and the need for local bed space continue to outpace capacity and available funding. The BOC estimates that an additional 55,500 jail beds and 6,000 local juvenile facility beds will be needed in the next 10 years, and that it will cost over \$3.3 billion to construct these beds.

In recent years, the Legislature has established and funded innovative grant programs designed to identify effective strategies for reducing juvenile crime and delinquency. The BOC administers two of these initiatives, the Juvenile Crime Enforcement and Accountability Challenge Grant Program and the Repeat Offender Prevention Project. Chapter 5 explains how the BOC is working in partnership with counties to ensure the successful implementation of their unique community-based projects targeting juvenile offenders and at-risk youth.

Chapter 6 outlines the BOC's efforts to improve the quality of local corrections personnel by establishing and maintaining selection and training standards that are relevant, legally defensible and valid. This section also includes an update on the statewide subvention to assist counties and cities with the cost of meeting these standards.

The challenges facing local corrections are many and varied. The BOC is ready to build upon a foundation of successful state and local collaboration in order to meet these challenges, which include maintaining the state's multibillion dollar investment in local jails; adding needed bed space, including sufficient maximum security beds; and keeping facilities operating in compliance with minimum standards.